If labour in the countryside was scarce, there was great potential capacity in the spare time of the town workers—those in black coats and those in corduroy trousers alike. They could not but get out to help on the farms. All round every town there spreads a devastated area of vacant building plots and other waste land which these men and their families could reach in their leisure hours and during their weekly half-days. Quite early we recognised the possibilities of war time allotments, and even in the first year of the War there was a rapid growth of the movement.

Recruiting

So promising was this development, that towards the end of 1916 Lord Crawford decided to press forward a further extension by the use of his powers under the Defence of the Realm Acts. On 5th December, 1916, a Regulation was issued empowering the Board of Agriculture to requisition any land for cultivation, and to delegate its powers in this respect to local authorities. On 8th December, the day after I took office as Prime Minister, I authorised the Board to issue the Cultivation of Urban Lands Order, 1916, which empowered urban local authorities to take possession of unoccupied land for the purpose of forming allotments, without previously getting the consent of the owner; to set up allotments on common land with the consent of the Board; and to set them up on any occupied land subject to the consent of

Cultivation of Urban Lands

owner and occupier.

This Order opened the way for a further great allotment advance. Under it, commons, heaths and vacant building plots were commandeered. Hampstead Heath was ploughed up and planted with potatoes. Unsightly wastes were transfigured by